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**MMS Postpones Public Hearings on Draft *Environmental Impact Statement on Proposed Delineation Drilling Activity on Undeveloped Leases Offshore Santa Barbara County, California.*  
*MMS Fully Complies with Recent Ruling Over Pacific OCS Lease Suspensions***

The Interior Department's Minerals Management Service (MMS) announced today that it will **postpone public hearings** on the draft *Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on Proposed Delineation Drilling Activities in Federal Waters Offshore Santa Barbara County, California* scheduled for **July 10 and July 12 in Santa Barbara and Santa Maria, California** respectfully. Dates, times, and locations of rescheduled public hearings will be announced when that information is available. The MMS will also extend the comment period on the draft EIS; notification of the close of the comment period will accompany future announcements on the public hearings.

The June 20, 2001 ruling by U.S. District Judge Claudia Wilken requires that the MMS and the California Coastal Commission review lease suspensions for the 36 undeveloped OCS oil and gas leases off California under provisions of the Coastal Zone Management Act. Although the court decision did not address the EIS, the MMS will postpone public hearings on the EIS until the agency can complete action implementing the Court's order.

The public hearings were to be held at the Fess Parker Doubletree Hotel in Santa Barbara on July 10 and the Ethel Pope Auditorium in Santa Maria on July 12 to receive comments on the draft EIS.

MMS is the federal agency in the U.S. Department of the Interior that manages the nation's oil, natural gas and other mineral resources on the outer continental shelf in federal offshore waters. The agency also collects, accounts for and disburses mineral revenues from federal and Indian leases. These collections totaled nearly \$8 billion last year and more than \$110 billion since the agency was created in 1982. Annually, nearly \$1 billion from those revenues go into the Land and Water Conservation Fund for the acquisition and development of state and federal park and recreation lands.

**-MMS-PACIFIC-**

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